



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420**

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In Reply Refer To: 10A2

May 4, 2001

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

**THE VHA HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
INNOVATION AWARDS PROGRAM**

1. The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Human Resources Management (HRM) Innovation Awards Program is an annual awards program designed to recognize the innovative efforts being made in VHA facilities to support the mission of improving the health of veterans served. This program specifically recognizes those actions that individuals are taking to implement VA's goal of becoming an "employer of choice." **NOTE:** *Innovations chosen to receive awards will be publicized to the field for review and potential adoption at other medical centers.*

2. Criteria to be considered in evaluating award nominations include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Improvements in the hiring process.
- b. Linking awards and recognition to the accomplishment of organizational goals and customer service improvements.
- c. Encouraging a culture of teamwork.
- d. Creating a stimulating, safe, and appealing work environment.
- e. Efforts to achieve diversity and equal employment opportunity within the workforce.
- f. Empowering employees.
- g. Being a learning organization.
- h. Ensuring the availability of necessary HRM tools.
- i. Innovative approaches to labor-management relations.

3. A subcommittee of the VHA HRM Advisory Group (HRMAG) will solicit and review all nominations and recommend winners to the Under Secretary for Health. Nominations are to be no longer than three typed pages. Supporting material, such as brochures, videos, training documents, etc., that complement the narrative portion of the nomination are encouraged.

May 4, 2001

4. Award recipients must be Federal employees and may be in either of the following two categories:

a. Individual employees.

b. Teams. **NOTE:** *The definition of "team" is unrestricted. Teams may be comprised of employees from within one office, from across organizational lines within a facility, from multiple facilities, etc.*

5. Recipients will receive a plaque and a monetary award. The recipient selected for the "individual" category will receive a plaque and a cash award of up to \$5,000. The "team" recipients will receive plaques and a group cash award of up to \$15,000. Monetary award amounts will be determined based on an assessment of the scope and/or value of the innovation. **NOTE:** *The subcommittee may also select additional recipients of merit to be awarded plaques only.*

6. Nominations will identify a practice or practices that are actually in place where there are accomplishments that can be documented. Nominations are to contain the following:

a. The category for which a nomination is being submitted.

b. The name(s) of the nominee (or nominees), business address, telephone number, and fax number.

c. The name of the nominator's name, title, business address, e-mail address, telephone number, and fax number.

d. A detailed description of the innovative practice or practices.

e. A description of the issue or problem being addressed along with information on the approach developed, improvements in customer service, savings or cost avoidance, and any other appropriate information.

f. An original and five copies of each nomination and any supporting materials are due by June 15, 2001. **NOTE:** *Nominations from field facilities are to have the endorsement of the medical center director.*

7. Send all nominations to:

VA Headquarters
Veterans Health Administration
Attention: Mary Cieplak
Management Support Office (10A2A)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

May 4, 2001

8. For additional information, contact Mary Cieplak, Management Support Office (10A2A), VA Headquarters, at 202-273-8875, or e-mail at mary.cieplak@hq.med.va.gov

Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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